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Skating, as in the Olden Time.



The Fencing Position.

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 1955

THE ART OF SKATING



CYCLOS

GLASGOW

PUBLISHED BY THOMAS MURRAY & SON,

LONDON, DAVID BOCHE,

EDINBURGH, JOHN MENZIES,

THE
ART OF SKATING;

WITH
PLAIN DIRECTIONS

FOR THE
ACQUIREMENT OF THE MOST DIFFICULT AND
ELEGANT MOVEMENTS.

BY
CYCLOS,
A MEMBER OF THE GLASGOW SKATING CLUB.

GLASGOW:
THOMAS MURRAY & SON, ARGYLE STREET.
LONDON: DAVID BOGUE. — EDINBURGH: JOHN MENZIES.
MDCCCLII.

268. C. 314.



JOHN NEILSON, PRINTER, TRONGATE.

To the
Right Hon. the Earl of Eglinton and Wintoun,
and the
Members of the Glasgow Skating Club,
This humble attempt
To extend the Knowledge, and improve the Practice, of their favourite Art,
Is most respectfully Dedicated.

P R E F A C E.

PREVIOUS to commencing this Treatise, the Author was not aware of the existence of any other on the same subject, except a very small one published in Belfast, and which he saw many years ago. Wishing to see it again lately, he caused it to be enquired for, but failed to obtain a copy, which circumstance decided him on endeavouring to fill the vacancy.

Since commencing, however, he has fallen in with articles upon skating, in "Blaine's Encyclopædia of Rural Sports," "Walker's Manly Exercises," and "Captain Clias's Gymnastics."

These are good enough as far as they go, but not sufficiently complete to supersede the want of a more comprehensive work. The same may be said of Captain Jones' Treatise, published in the last century, and which, though devoted solely to this elegant accomplishment, is erroneous in many respects, and deficient in others. The backward circles seem not to have been known then, for only in his last paragraph does he hint

at such a possibility, where he mentions, as "newly discovered," the "heart-shaped" figure, corresponding to our figure 3. Moreover, the book was written in the days of cocked hats and minuets, when every act of life was a sample of cold, studied, and acted formality, and it is therefore too punctilious about attitudes to suit the ideas of the present day. For the illustrations, the Author is indebted to this old work, and he adopted them because the ancient costume seemed better suited for the representation.

It is not without considerable diffidence that the Author has ventured upon his task, and with something of the feeling of insecurity with which a young skater might attempt a "Double 3." It may be said to him, "Surely you, who presume to criticise and instruct, must be a first-rate performer yourself, or at all events have a high estimate of your own doings," but the sequitur is not conclusive. "Non omnibus adire Corinthum," every one can't win the Corinthian games; yet no doubt, many a good Greek who failed, could criticise and admire, possibly even instruct. In the same way, many a one knows good music who cannot play, and the best teachers are often indifferent vocalists. So, Reader, it is with the Author in skating, and so it may be with you, in spite of your best efforts; but practice will do much, especially when right directed, as he hopes to direct you. And for the rest, you have probably observed in your course through life, that skating is not the only line in which high precept does not ensure lofty practice.

To see really good skating, is the best teaching ; but, as a general rule, that is only to be seen in the large cities, where the greater field of emulation has produced it. Country skaters, from never seeing it, are not even aware of what can be done on skates.

To spread the better knowledge of this graceful, healthful, and exhilarating accomplishment, is the aim of the present treatise ; and the Author hopes, that if he has succeeded in giving lucid descriptions of the various movements, and practical directions for the easiest mode of attaining them, his work will be acceptable to his Readers, as well as satisfactory to their respectful well-wisher,

CYCLOS.

CHAPTER I. — INTRODUCTORY.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES IN GENERAL.

Angling, Cricket, Archery, Horse Racing, Swimming, Yachting, Golf, Bowling, Quoits, Shooting, Salmon-fishing, Deer-stalking, Falconry, Hunting, Coursing, Curling.

As every time has its peculiar occupations and duties, so, likewise, has every season its appropriate sports and pastimes.

In the first flush of Spring, when Nature seems to breathe a new life over the lethargic Earth, and each manifold phase of being responds to the new-born influences pulsating within it, man shares in the general joy.

As soon as the season turns, and

“ Winter, slumbering in the open air,

“ Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring,”

from the din and turmoil of pent-up cities, he longs once more for the pure breath of heaven—for the hills, and the woods, and the streams.

“ Whanne that Aprile, with his shoures sote,

“ The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,

“ Whan Zephirus eke, with his sote brethe,

A

"Enspired hath in everie holte and hethe

"The tender croppes.

"And small foules, maken melodie,

"That sleepen alle night with open eye—

"Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages."

Pilgrimages,—not indeed, in these modern times, to the shrine of Thomas-a-Beckett, or any of the other "grisly saints and martyrs hairy" whom our innocent forefathers delighted to honour; but, perchance, to some spot equally hallowed by old associations, and more likely to communicate a new elasticity to the mind harassed with business, or jaded with pleasure.

Already at this early season of the year,

"By Isis, Cam, or yellow Avon,

"The angler, joyous, pursues his sport."

Or still more happy his lot, who,

"When soft winds wake the grey-eyed morn,"

far from the busy hum of the world, wanders, with rod and basket, away in the upland solitudes, by some rushing Highland stream, or lonely mountain tarn;—his bosom swelling with the glorious inspiration of the mountain air—awakening all the higher feelings of his nature, and bringing to his heart and lips "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." Nor less his delight, when, in the calm and placid evening, with well-filled creel

of golden crimson-spotted trout, he wanders homeward

“By paved fountain, or by rushing brook,

“Or by the beached margent of the sea.”

April passes, and we welcome in the May—the
“merrie month”—the beloved of the poets:—

“The flowery May, who from her green lap throws

“The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose,”

when the may-thorn sheds its perfume from the hedge-rows; and, on the common, the broom and the furze commence their rivalry in wealth of golden blossoms;—not unheeded by the pale artisans, who have gathered from the neighbouring town to gladden their weary souls with bat, and ball, and wicket;—England’s own game. May the breath of the May soon restore the hue of health to their cheeks, pallid with a Winter’s toil.

Nor have the more aristocratic sons and daughters of England no part in the festival. In royal park or ducal lawn, we have seen them, with tents and targets pitched, enjoying the revival of one of England’s ancient games. The excitement has been keen, for they have been shooting for the silver arrow, and yonder tall graceful girl, with the bow still in her hand, like a new Diana—has just won it. How beautiful she looks, with the rose of health and the flush of excitement on her fair Saxon face.

Another sketch ere we bid farewell to the "merrie month."

It is towards the end of the month, and the sun is shining gloriously. All London is abroad holiday-making, for it is "Darby day." What crowds of happy faces—what strange varieties of vehicle!—one wonders where they come from, and where they can hide themselves all the other days of the year.

The crowd seem mad with jollity and fun. And what a crowd! No exclusiveness here, for all classes mingle, and there are nearly a hundred thousand on Epsom downs, all animated by one common feeling—love for the most thoroughly national of England's sports.

The numbers are up, and the saddling bell has rung. See, now they come forward for their preliminary canter. What a splendid sight! Thirty thorough-breds, of matchless form, clean of limb, and with the fire of courage in their eye—the pick of England — and that means the world — and backed by peerless riders, each admirably skilled,

"To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,

"And witch the world with noble horsemanship."

Now they are marshalled at the post,—and now they are off. What an eager reaching on tiptoes, and straining of eyes, over all that vast crowd!

and what a breathless suspense watching the result!—the whole sporting hopes and anxieties of a year condensed into two minutes. But they approach the finish; and many a gallant steed that has shone in the foremost ranks so far, now flags with bated speed. The contest is left to a few, and how bravely they struggle; horse and rider alike nerving heart and limb, as they strain neck and neck for foremost place; and the shouts of their partizans, as they cheer them on, are finished in one tumultuous, wild, deafening cheer, as, in the last stride, the favourite's colours flash past the chair, and the people hail the world-renowned winner of a "Derby."

In June we have no particular addition to the list of Summer sports; but the genial air is still more wooing, the earth wears a richer garb, and the growing heat induces still more the indulgence of all sports in which the "world of waters" has its part.

Dear to the lover of nature, who listens enraptured to her every voice, as he wanders by fountain, wood, and stream, where the sound of rustling leaves and falling waters sinks upon his ear with a gentle cadence—

"A noise as of a hidden brook

"In the leafy month of June,

“That to the sleeping woods, all night,
“Singeth a quiet tune ;”

or by the clear and pebbly river, where the spotted trout leaps at the mayfly, and where the broken current, glittering in the sunshine,

“Makes sweet music to the enamelled stones,
“Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
“It overtaketh in its pilgrimage.”

Pleasant are the July heats to him who, with strong and nervous limb, loves to disport in the waters themselves, enjoying the gentle heaving of a Summer sea, or the still more placid bosom of lake or river.

Sailing, too, enjoys its share of favour, and in that, need we say, that England has attained a proud pre-eminence. Though of late days, America, the strong and vigorous child of her age, has wrested some of the laurels from her brow,—we grudge them not ; still we can point to the honourable rivalry and enterprize which carries our yachtsmen into every sea.

We can point to one who, having, like Vasco di Gama, braved the storm-spirit of the Cape, and sailed into the most distant oceans, carries his country's flag to found a new dominion.

To another who, after circumnavigating the globe in his small bark, goes on an errand of noble

philanthropy to dare the terrors of the frozen north, and lays down life itself in his glorious quest.

“High reward to deeds of generous daring,
“Heaven, the bold achiever high upbearing,
“To the seats for godlike men decreed.”

For the elderlies, who love the quiet comforts of home, there is, in Scotland, the ancient and illustrious game of Golf; and pleasant pastime it is to follow the feather-flighted* ball, over bush, and brae, and “bunker;” and many a time, and oft, have we joyously done it.

Both north and south of Tweed, the Bowling green spreads out its velvet turf, for those whose inclinations “biass” that way; and we have Quoits for the athletic artizan, in the long summer evenings, when the daylight does not close upon his toil.

In August, the crow of the gor-cock summons us to the moors and mountains; and happy they to whom the summons comes not vainly.

Now, too, is the salmon stemming the rapids, making its upward way, ever upward, impelled by

* Though as hard as wood, it is actually stuffed with down, but the packing is pretty close, for it takes several hatfulls of feathers to fill one ball about an inch and a half in diameter.

the strong necessity of its nature, back to its early haunts.

With what exultation does the angler view, though but for an instant, its broad flank gleaming with blue and silver, as it dashes at his tinselled lure, followed by the ringing music of the reel, as with wayward fin the strong fish darts deep into the recesses of some boiling pool, anon flinging himself high in air, struggling to escape the barbed fate that remorselessly pursues him.

In the later months of the year, the Highland sportsman lays aside fowling piece and salmon rod, and then the sharp crack of the rifle may be heard echoing from rock to rock, and crag to crag, as the noble red deer, "a stag of ten," falters along, with the gouts of blood trickling over his shaggy coat. The dogs are slipped, (deerhounds of the true Highland breed, with the shape and speed of the greyhound, the size and strength of the bloodhound, and the nose and coat of the terrier,) and ere he has reached the bottom of the corrie they are at his throat, and the big round tears have barely gathered in his melancholy eye, till, with a cry of agony, he throws up his head, falls back on his haunches, then on his side, and dies.

The Lowland sportsman, too, has not been idle. His high-trained pointers have been traversing the

turnip lands and stubbles, and many a well-filled bag of gold-plumed pheasants, and spotted partridges, with now and then a snipe or a woodcock, or a stray mallard, has he shot over them.

We hope he does not indulge in the butchery of the "battue," for that is not true sport. But we would love to see him, like the knights of old, with belled and hooded hawk on his manly wrist, and attended by a "goodlie companie," following the windings of some sedgy stream, while his spaniels are beating through the reeds to raise the watchful, keen-eyed heron from her fishing quest, yonder where she sits so motionless by the pool.

And there is noble sport for him in the clear autumnal days, when the fields are bare, and the woods shorn of their Summer splendour, save

"The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
"That dances as often as dance it can;
"Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
"On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky."

The dead leaves lie brown and faded, and gathered into heaps and drifts by the hedgesides, and the berries hang ripe and red on the Brier, and on the Rowan tree, and on the Thorn by the covert side, where you may see a field of well-mounted sportsmen gathered in knots expectingly; their steeds are pawing and impatient, while the

hounds range through the gorse. But hark, there is a whimper and an eager cry from the leading hound, as he dashes on the hot scent, and the whole pack, following suit, give their music to the breeze, as, with heads high, they burst from the covert, and in close cluster stretch away over the fallows.

“Listen how the hounds and horn

“Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,

“From the side of some hoar hill,

“Through the high wood echoing shrill.”

Or, if he prefers less exciting sport, you may see him on foot with his keepers, and a couple or two of greyhounds, noble dogs, lithe of limb, majestic of form, and with the unmistakeable impress of high breeding in every vein and feature,

“Unmatched for courage, wind, and speed.”

We are now approaching the dead depth of winter; the Highland sportsman, like a migratory bird, wends his way southwards, for the mountains are covered with unmelting snows, and he must seek his amusements in a less rigorous climate.

When the dull thick fogs of November, and its ungenial alternations of sleet and rain, have given place to the clear and bracing frosts of Christmas-tide; when the yule log burns on the hearth, and the holly hangs in the hall—when, outside, the

brief bright sun shines with slanting ineffectual ray, over the snow-covered ground, whose crisp and frozen surface creaks under foot ;

“ Ah ! bitter chill it was.

“ The owl, for all his feathers, was a cold ;

“ The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,

“ And silent was the flock in woolly fold ;”

and when pond, and lake, and river are coated with a strong and slippery surface—then there are pleasant occupations indoors for the long evenings, and pleasant pastimes abroad for the short days.

In Scotland, we have Curling; called, from its exuberant hilarity, “ the roaring game.”

It is eminently a game that creates pleasant sympathies between all ranks and classes ; on the curling rink, if nowhere else, social distinctions are forgotten, and “the Lord and the Laird,” and the minister of the Parish, troop to the ice, with their

“ Channelstanes, crampets, and besoms so green,”

and play in the same rink with the peasant and the artizan.

It would be strange, indeed, if a game so thoroughly wedded to the feelings of the Lowland Scotch, had been forgotten in their national poetry. But it is not so. In Burns and Hogg, and down through all grades of the “*Dii minorum gentium*,”

we find it honourably mentioned; and there is hardly a local club that has not half a dozen original songs of its own, all in high eulogy of this manly game. *ex. gr.*

“It clears the brain, stirs up the native heat,

“And gives, a gallant appetite for meat.”

The grand Caledonian Curling Club, which is a union of all the local clubs in Scotland, have an annual “bonspeil;” and, when weather and ice are favourable, the gathering is very large, and the scene animated in the extreme.

Fancy a spacious Loch, with a strong and smooth sheet of ice,—the frost keen, and the air clear and bracing.

The whole surface is crowded like a fair,—between spectators and curlers, there may be fifteen or twenty thousand people on the Loch. It is county against county, and parish against parish, so that the interest circulates through all. The music of the stones ringing along the ice, resounds from a hundred rinks, and merrily over the wide expanse, echo the cheers of the players, and the shouts of the Skippers, as they convey their instructions in such native “Doric” as the following, which your wondering ear occasionally catches from amid the “Babel” of voices: “Gie’s a patlid;” “Pit smed-dum in’t;” “Come under your grannie’s wing;”

“Scoop it up;” “Haud the win’ aff that ane, he’s gleg;” and many other quaint, but well understood directions, uttered in all the joyous hilarity of the moment.

As a mere spectator, you feel yourself insensibly stirred by the “*gaudia certaminis*,” the spirit of “the roaring game,” and, ardently longing to join in it, you give vent to your admiration in the well known motto of the Duddingston Club—

“*Sic Scoti, alii non aequè felices.*”

CHAPTER II.

SKATING.

Winter sport; defence; antiquity; Skating in Northern countries; Women skating; Distance and speed; Russia; Norway; America; Anecdote of Indians; Anecdote of Wolves; Canadian Winter; English skating; London; Edinburgh.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, briefly glanced at most of the other outdoor sports and pastimes in which our countrymen indulge in their respective seasons, I now come to another of those, which can only be followed in the Brumal depths of Winter, when the waters have been bridged over with a crystalline floor — that one of which it is my chief purpose to treat — the difficult, elegant, and manly accomplishment of Skating;—a pursuit which we follow with enthusiasm, amid

“The icy fang,

“And churlish chiding of the Winter’s wind,”

or in the dead stillness of a set frost, when the winds seem to have been frozen in the air, for the purpose of covering the bare twigs and branches

of the Summer - forsaken trees with a hoary feathering of silver ;—powdering, with sparkling diamond dust, the limp and scanty grass ;—and decking, with fairy crystals, each mean and withered atom of the Summer's wreck.

I certainly have occasionally heard an invidious detractor say, that the attribute of "manly," did not apply to skating ; suggesting that it might be a good enough exercise for a schoolboy, or a "moonish youth," but that all those of a larger growth who indulged in it, must be of somewhat deficient mental calibre.

Those who say so, are the "rough diamonds" of the world,—those extremely useful members of society, who bring their "cui bono?" into every question, and are apt to look upon all refinement and elegance, as pertaining to the effeminate. I never heard any one who could skate well, make such a remark ; for in this, as in most things, it will be observed, that those only who are deficient in any knowledge or accomplishment, affect to despise it. To praise, would be to acknowledge the deficiency in themselves ; and, to narrow-minded people, that would engender a feeling of inferiority, the admission of which would be too great a trial for their pride, and they find it much easier to slight what they have not, than to acquire it.

That skating is something more than mere exercise for schoolboys, is best proved by the fact, that, to become a really good skater, requires so much careful practice, that schoolboys do not attain proficiency. I do not see any reason why they might not, and I hope to aid in making it an earlier pursuit than it now is; nevertheless, the fact remains, that as yet I have never seen a mere boy a good skater.

Whatever innocent pursuit calls forth the energy and assiduity of a man to accomplish,—particularly when not entirely exempt from personal risk, can never be fairly called “unmanly.”

As to the early history or remote antiquity of the art, I can give the reader very little information. “Blaine” says,

“Skating, although unquestionably a much
“more early practice among us, is first noticed in
“the description of London, by Fitz Stephen, who
“relates that

‘When the great fenne or moore (which water-
‘eth the walles of the citie on the north side) is
‘frozen, many young men play upon the yce.’

Again :

‘Some, stryding as wide as they may, doe slide
‘swiftlie; asome tye bones to their feete, and
‘under their heeles, and, shoving themselves by a

‘little picked staffe, doe slide as swiftlie as a birde
‘flyeth in the aire, or an arrow out of a crossbow.’”

Certainly this was skating of a very primitive description ; and that would not, I think, indicate a much anterior invention.

Blaine also informs us, probably from the same old authority, that

“ One of their sports was, for two to start a great
“ way off, opposite to each other, and when they met,
“ to lift their poles and strike at each other, when
“ one or both fell, and were carried to a distance
“ from each other by the celerity of their motion.”

And he further says :

“ Of the present wooden skates, shod with iron,
“ there is no doubt we obtained a knowledge from
“ Holland.”

In our own country, where the opportunities of skating are rare, and of short continuance, and where the distances that can be traversed on fresh water are so small, skating is purely a pastime, and is therefore cultivated more in the direction of elegance, than practical utility.

But in more Northern countries, where the roads are blocked up for months with deep snows, the frozen surface of the lakes and rivers forms their only roadway ; skating and sleighing their only means of travelling and communication be

tween pretty distant places. In this way, the inhabitants, men and women alike, are skaters, and can travel their fifteen miles an hour with ease, keeping up the pace for several hours.

One of these skaters, however perfect in his own line, would make no appearance whatever in any of our English clubs ; and, in the same way, I fear, our finest performers would be utterly distanced in the skating races of the North, where they contest for victory on a thirty mile course.

A Dutch woman skating to market, will carry her baby, and a basket of eggs, forty miles of a morning ; and in Winter, the Amsterdam market for country produce, is mostly supplied by skaters.

Sleighs pushed by skaters, or drawn by horses, or even impelled by sails, are used for the same purpose in those countries ; and Blaine says, that in Lincolnshire, something of this sort is done—that skating is put to a practical use ; and that a Lincolnshire man, for a wager of a hundred guineas, skated a mile in three minutes.

In speaking of speed, he mentions another remarkable instance, that of an officer having skated from Montreal to Quebec in one day ! which, he says, “ considering the state of the ice on these “ large rivers, was a wonderful performance.” Wonderful enough, certainly, to make me some-

what sceptical, for, whatever might be the state of the ice, the actual distance is 180 miles.

In this country, we mostly make Summer our holiday-time, for in Winter we have so much wet weather, that a clear frosty day can never be reckoned on till it comes. But in other countries, particularly where the employment of the people is wholly agricultural, the Winter, which brings its repose to the soil, brings its rest and rejoicing to the people also. Labour has laid aside her sickle, and garnered its fruits, and the time for the plough is still distant ;—why should she not feast and be merry.

In Russia, the Winter is especially a festive time. The brilliantly illuminated and furnished Ice Palaces of the Neva, with their feasting, and music, and dancing,—the artificial twin ice hills, down one of which the sledge rushes thundering with such velocity, as carries it entirely up the other,—with skating, and sleighing, and all sorts of ice amusements, mark the progress of the Russian winter.

In Norway and Sweden, and round the shores of the Baltic, the hardy hunter follows the chase on skates ; and his speed and facility in turning, enable him to attack, and avoid retaliation from, the ferocious wolf, till he is brought down with repeated wounds.

The American skater sometimes owes his preservation to his speed and endurance on the irons. There is a well-known story of a settler in the far west, who was taken captive by the Indians, and, after some days of bondage and torture, was shown a pair of skates that had been included in the plunder of his village. His captors, ignorant of their use, asked him to show them;—a beam of hope cheered his despairing heart as, with trembling hands, he proceeded to fasten them on. He soon got on the ice, and commenced shuffling and tumbling about fantastically, but taking care gradually to move farther from the shore, the unsuspecting Indians laughing at his awkwardness.

They were then upon the far shore of one of the immense lakes of that vast continent; and the sheet of ice that stretched before the skater's gaze, ended only in the horizon.

When he thought himself far enough away, he fell for the last time, and bound the skates more firmly to his feet, then, rising, he stretched out at full speed, while the Indians scarcely recovered from their astonishment in time to send after him a few random bullets, which bounded and tinkled along the ice harmlessly.

Still, though free, he was not out of danger; he had a vast desert to traverse without food or shel-

ter, exposed to the chance attack of wolves, or still more remorseless Indians; and frequently turned from his course for miles, by some wide crevass, till he could find a spot narrow enough to leap over. But after journeying in this manner for two days and nights, when exhausted and despairing, he fortunately fell in with a trapper, who guided him to a settlement.

More recently, an incident happened to a Canadian settler, in which his skates, though they certainly led him into the danger, also bore him safely out of it.

His habitation lay on the banks of a river, and, being fond of skating, he had gone out alone one fine moonlight night to enjoy it.

The moon shone with unusual splendour, rendering more faint the brilliancy of the myriads of stars, which, in so clear an atmosphere, shone like diamond points, deep set in the interminable blue. The ever-varying aurora borealis, so magnificent in that climate, would ever and anon come shooting up from the horizon in crescents, and columns, and domes of many-coloured light, till the whole zenith would become splendidly irradiated, and the ear could connect with the flashes, a sound as of silken banners shaken in the wind; these shapes changing as suddenly to narrow streamers, and thin

flakes of shooting and floating light, ever brightening,—ever darkening.

The ice was smooth and clear, and reflected in its motionless mirror the radiance of the heavens, and the deep shadow of the primeval forest, which stretched gloomily on either side.

Tempted by the beauty of the night, he had wandered rather far from home, and had entered one of the many smaller creeks that joined the river: here his path gradually darkened, for, as the stream grew narrow, the tall old trees met and interlaced over-head.

Suddenly, from the brush at his side, came a low growl, and, looking round, he saw two fierce eyes glaring blue at him through the darkness;—anon others and others, on all sides, and closer, till he thought he could feel the hot breath of the hungry wolves which were closing round him. Instant flight was his only chance for life, and, turning, he rushed for home. The wolves followed, and the chase was a quick and a hot one; for a time, the skater kept well ahead, and many of his pursuers gave up the chase. He was approaching his home, and could at last even see the light from his window glancing occasionally through the forest;—but he felt that his powers were nearly exhausted, and some of the wolves were still closing on his

track, with their long lumbering gallop that never tired. He saw his home before him, and heard the welcome sound of his watchdogs barking. Oh, for one minute of Lion or Ranger—but alas, they were chained, and could render no help. The wolves were at his heels, and, without any other thought than that of meeting his fate, he turned sharp to one side. The foremost wolf made a dash at him, but, unable to check its velocity on the slippery ice, it slid past him, as did the rest; and the skater found himself with a fresh start, and nerving himself anew, he dashed on. A second time overtaken, he had recourse to the same manœuvre, when, probably frightened by the loud barking of the dogs, the wolves gave up the chase; and, in joy and thankfulness for his preservation, the settler reached his home, resolved not again to indulge in the romantic at such hazard.

In Canada, the Winters are particularly severe. The snows that fall in December, seldom vanish till May; the intermediate time being mostly occupied with intense frosts, varied, of course, with snow storms and thaws.

The thermometer ranges from 25° to 30° *below* zero, giving about sixty degrees of frost! (in Scotland, 20° *above* zero, which is twelve degrees of frost is considered very keen, and we rarely have it so low.)

This severity of climate, however, seems almost to add a zest to out-door amusements. Business and pleasure being alike suspended, all ranks and classes indulge in a general jubilee; skates are sharpened, and sleighs new furbished; and the city inhabitants, late so active in business, now follow pleasure with equal enthusiasm, in which their country friends are in no way behind. Visiting commences in furore, distance being no consideration; city balls and country junkettings, where each guest brings his own dish, are all the go, and the jingle of the sleigh bells is heard in all directions; the chance of being snowed up, and the many hazards of the road, only adding zest to the fun.

Now and then, at rare intervals, the St. Lawrence is completely frozen over at Quebec, and then a grand carnival takes place. Tents and booths are erected, and skating and sleigh racing, and other glacial sports, are the order of the day.

Something of this kind has taken place in London also, when the Thames has been frozen over. A fair was always held on its surface, which lasted with the ice. But this is like a jubilee year, once in half a century, and likely to be still less frequent as the channel is deepened for the navigation.

The London skaters resort mostly to the Ser-

pentine water in Hyde Park, for their amusement, and when that is well frozen, the scene is a very animated one, the crowd being sometimes so dense, as to preclude much fancy skating. There, however, are to be seen the finest skaters that our country can boast of, and even foreigners, accustomed to the finest execution in their own more practical line, admire the elegance of the English evolutions.

In Scotland, notwithstanding our national vanity, we must, I fear, acknowledge our inferiority in skating, for though there are a few good skaters about the large towns, the number is very small, and, in country districts, the performances are usually very indifferent.

The Edinburgh skaters go to Duddingstone Loch, a very pretty sheet of water, to the south of the city, behind Arthur's Seat; and if you take the road over the hill on a fine frosty day, when the ice is bearing, you see as pleasant and lively a scene as can be witnessed anywhere.

The lake is spread out before you, so far below, that you take in the whole surface at a glance,—the ice is brilliantly white, for though there is no snow on the ground, the busy skaters have scraped a surface of snow over the ice. You don't exactly see what they are doing, but only, that they are

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rushing frantically about, and tumbling over each other; ever in restless motion, just like the denizens of an anthill, and almost as numerous. There is a large sprinkling of ladies, also, and one or two of them you see with skates on, and performing very well, too, generally much better than the cavalier on whose arm they affect to lean.

I like to see ladies skate ; though, no doubt, the early steps must be rather trying to female nerves and female drapery ; and we must not expect our fair friends to learn in public, or even to make an appearance, till they have got over the first difficulties, and feel themselves pretty secure against casualties. But where they can have the opportunity of a private pond for first practice, these difficulties may be easily surmounted.

In Glasgow, there is probably less skating than in any town in the kingdom of near its size; the inhabitants are so much engaged with business all day, and there is so total an absence of idle people, that the ice has only a few devotees.

These few, however, form the centre of a very flourishing skating club, who have a pond of their own; and, besides this, there are a number of ponds and small lakes within convenient distance of the town, and being situated so far from the sea, they have at least three times as many days of ice in each season, as the Edinburgh men.

The Clyde is rarely frozen, and when it is, the ice is usually bad, from the rise and fall caused by the tidal influence breaking it.

Attempts have been made frequently, to invent skating that could dispense with frost, and be practised at any season.

I remember a Professor who undertook, for a consideration, to teach a mode of going on wheeled skates ; and he certainly did wonders himself, but somehow his pupils made no progress, and then it ceased to pay. Probably the acquirement was found to resemble too much that of the clown at Astleys, who runs about the stage, up hill and down dale, perched on the top of a big round ball.

A few years ago, an artificial ice was invented, which was to put Jack Frost's nose out of joint completely, and be better than the original ; but it turned out to be only "property" ice after all, produced in the climate of the footlights, and unfit for any other.

CHAPTER III.

THE SKATE.

The Common Skate ; its defects ; its proper fastenings ; the Spring Skate ; the Glasgow Club Skate ; general considerations ; the Stock ; the Iron ; the Fastenings ; the Boot.

THE ordinary skate is no doubt perfectly familiar to my Readers, and requires no description.

It is by no means a perfect implement, but in some respects very deficient. The principal of these defects is, that the wood does not sufficiently adapt itself to the shape of the foot, and is not broad enough to give a steady support, or to prevent its shifting.

The iron also projects beyond the foot in front, and falls short of it at the heel, and is therefore not so well under control as when it exactly follows the length of the foot both ways.

The price varies with the size and quality, running from 3s. 6d. to 15s. a pair.

I recommend the learner to begin with a very

cheap pair, and after he has made some progress in the art, to abandon this sort of skate entirely for one of the superior kind, which I shall hereafter describe.

In the sale shops, the quality of the fastenings is usually proportioned to that of the skate; but let the iron and wood be as common as the learner pleases, he should have the fastenings good; and they should consist of a good screw to go up into the heel, and a small bar of iron across the tread of the foot, an inch forward from the broadest place, and turned up at the ends to catch the sole of the boot. If the learner has these, the straps will never require to be painfully tightened. One long strap to go round the foot, through all the holes in the stock, will do very well, or a back heel strap may be used in addition.

In buying, let him look to the heel screw, and he must himself get the bar put on to fit his own foot; it must project more to one side of the wood than the other, for the outside of the foot,—and the skates are then right and left. It gives a broader foundation for the foot, and prevents the skate shifting from side to side; and a single day's skating with the three little pikes which are commonly found in its place, will do more damage to your boots, by cutting the soles across, than would

pay for the alteration four times over, besides the discomfort of constantly drawing the straps till the feet are cramped with them, and the skate shifting in spite of all.

The Patent Spring Skate of Messrs. Rodgers & Son, from its light and elegant appearance, was very much used for some years. The fastenings are simple, and quickly adjusted. Instead of a heel screw, there is a pike; and the spring is solely used for keeping this pike in its place, not, as might be imagined, for causing any buoyancy of motion. I used this skate for some years, but considered it insecure. The iron has too little support, and vibrates while skating, to such a degree that I have known it break; and being, for the sake of strength, of a uniform thickness, the edge does not catch the ice so well as those irons which are thinner at the foot than at the ice. It is also, like the common skate, too long at the toe and too short at the heel.

I do think, however, that many of the objections I have named, might be obviated by some alterations in construction, so that this beautiful skate might become thoroughly practical, which it is not at present. The price, I think, runs from 20s. to 25s.

The Glasgow Club Skate is unquestionably

superior to any other in principle. Its peculiarities are, a better form for the wooden stock or sole, which is made right and left, the exact size and shape of the boot sole, hollowed at the tread, and at the heel, so as to fit close to the foot.

Likewise, a better form for the iron, which does not extend in the least beyond the toe, where it is simply rounded up to the edge of the sole ; and has therefore none of those fine points and twisted up ends, which our grandfathers esteemed necessary elegancies, but which are, in reality, just as useful as the long shoe toes, which, in days of yore, were looped up to the gallant's knee, and from which, I daresay, the long skate points were borrowed. The iron extends backwards to the extreme edge of the heel, instead of being cut off an inch within it ; and the corner is rounded off, instead of ending in a sharp point, as in the old skate.

The advantages of the above form will be readily understood by any skater. The fitting of the wood enables the skate to attach more firmly, and the foot to be nearer the ice, which is an advantage. The iron being completely under the foot, is more within its control ; and especially is the full length to the heel, and its rounded extremity, an advantage as the skater progresses towards proficiency, when he comes to practise the various evolutions

which require to be, in whole or in part, performed backwards.

Neither does the want of the sharp heel, throw any difficulty in the way of stopping when you please, as has been sometimes suggested; nor is the new form less elegant on the foot than the old, on the contrary, it looks less cumbrous and more practical.

These skates can be had from the Club's makers, Hilliard & Chapman, Buchanan Street, but they are not patented in any way. The price ranges from 18s. to about 25s., depending partly on the size, but more on the description of fastening, which may be still more expensive.

Hitherto they have been only made with first-rate material and workmanship, but there is no reason why the shape might not be adopted in nearly the cheapest quality made; at all events, a very good skate might be made at a much lower figure than I have named, and yet possessing all the advantages of the improved form.

The stock or sole of the skate is made of beech or of boxwood; the former is lighter, and not so liable to split—the latter has no advantage but the questionable one of being prettier. Gutta percha has been tried, but, as yet, not very successfully; perhaps if it were mixed with sawdust from hard

wood, it might do very well, as mixing has been found advantageous for other purposes. As already stated, the sole should be made to fit closely to that of the boot, the under side should not be left full, but pared away as much as is consistent with the requisite strength, so that it may not readily touch the ice in leaning over.

The iron ought not to be very much curved from toe to heel. Makers are too apt to fancy, that a great curve is necessary to enable the skater to circle easily, forgetting that the turns will be made with shorter bearing on the ice, and therefore with less precision. Neither, however, ought the iron to be too straight, or it becomes difficult to make small circles; yet I would rather have them too straight than too much curved.

Walker says, "the curve should be the arc of a circle whose radius is two feet." This is quite too much,—for, placing the centre of the iron on the ice, each end would be about an inch above it,—therefore the bearing would be very short indeed. In my opinion, the curve should not be the arc of a circle at all, that is to say, it should not be a uniform curve, but very slight indeed along about six inches of the middle of the iron, and increasing towards each end, so that when the middle touches the ice, the ends will be not less than

an eighth, nor more than a quarter, of an inch above it. The lower surface of the iron should be a quarter of an inch broad or thereby ; it ought not to be grooved, as is sometimes done,—much to the detriment of the beginner, who, after learning on grooved skates, will feel himself like a cat on walnut shells when he puts on plain ones. The edges should, however, be kept sharp by occasional grinding, perhaps once in a season, or even less ; and in doing it, the iron should be held across the face of the grindstone, which, by giving an almost imperceptible concavity, ensures a sharp edge.

It is desirable to have the foot as near the ice as possible, yet necessary to have it so high, that, in leaning over, the edge of the sole should not touch the ice. If the iron is, at the middle of the foot, an inch clear of the stock, it should do,—but a broad foot may require an eighth more.

The mode of fastening may be varied to suit the fancy of the wearer, as there are many modes sufficiently good ;—if the skate is secure to the foot, so that it cannot shift in the least, the end is accomplished ; and if, in addition to that, the fastening aids in supporting the ankle, so much the better. Captain Jones thinks that a very firm fastening leaves the skate “no proper play,” and considers that a fault ; but I do not know what he

seeks play in the skate for. I think the more it can be united with the foot the better.

For the heel fastening, a peg is the most simple. It should be as long as the boot heel will admit, and square ; but, even then, unless the straps are kept very tight, it is constantly coming out, and is therefore very objectionable.

A good screw, up into the heel is very secure, but rather troublesome in putting on.

A narrow bar of iron across the heel, turned up at the ends, and with screws going into each side of the boot heel, is a very secure plan, and not troublesome, as the holes being in the sides of the heel, do not fill up. The screws should have broad flat heads, that they may not project inconveniently.

A bit of iron turned up at the back of the heel, with a single screw to go in, is frequently adopted ; but, though more quickly adjusted, it is not quite so secure as the side screws.

A small bolt in the centre of the skate heel, made to fit into a slit in an iron plate fixed on the boot heel, is an excellent plan. It must be so arranged, that, to insert the bolt, the skate is held at a right angle from the side of the foot, and then merely turning it to the line of the foot fixes it.

Another plan is, to carry the heel of the skate

iron up an inch on the back of the boot heel ;—a few deep notches are cut in it on the inner side, and a little bit of iron, with notches to correspond, is attached to the boot, sunk in at the back of the heel, so that, when together, the notches fit into one another. This I consider the best heel fastening I have seen.

The forward fastening may consist simply of a long strap to go round the foot, through all the holes in the stock, and once round the ankle for extra support ; but this is not quite so perfect a mode as having in front a piece of leather, about four inches broad, to meet over the foot, from the point of the toe to near the instep. It may be joined either by a lace, or by three buckles,—the latter for choice. This, with two small pikes under the tread, and a good heel fastening, would be sufficient ; but I prefer adding a strap through the middle hole of the stock, over the instep to the hole at the heel, thence up round the ankle, and forward to buckle on the instep.

The pikes under the tread, with the improved stock and improved fastenings, have not the objection of cutting the boot soles, as they do in the ill-contrived common skate.

Another mode of fastening has been recently tried, and I believe those who have adopted it highly approve of it.

An iron rim is attached to the wood, from the ball of the foot forward round the toe ; it is turned up and then inwards, so as to catch on to the boot sole. There is a rim round the heel also, turned up, but not inwards, and with a hole behind, for a spring or a small screw to go through into the boot heel. This is the whole fastening ; there are no straps of any description ; the wearer trusts the rest to a well-laced boot.

I hesitate to recommend this plan till it has had a longer trial. The objection I see is, that it requires too accurate fitting of the parts ; and I fear, as the boot wears, and becomes thinner and broader in the sole, it may not answer so well. Moreover, no boot but the one for which it was made would answer : with any other, the skates would be utterly useless.

Boot skates I have never used, but have heard them well spoken of. For ladies, I should consider them by far the best description. The skate iron is just inserted in the thick sole of a lacing ankle boot, and there is no fastening, beyond putting on the boot, and lacing it firmly. It is no new invention, and I therefore think if there was not some strong objection, it would have found more general favour with skaters. I find it advertised upwards of sixty years ago, as

"The new invented half-boot skait, sold by the inventor, Mr. James, No. 14, Newgate Street, and by Thomas Olio Rickman, No. 7, Upper Mary-lane Street. Price one guinea and a-half."

So, it has had at least plenty of time to introduce itself. One objection is, that instead of only a pair of skates, you have to carry a pair of boots to the ice, and may have some difficulty in the disposal, while there, of the walking boots you take off.

Whatever differences there may be in taste or opinion, as to the shape of the iron, or the mode of fastening, I apprehend there is none as to the best description of boot for skating in. Unquestionably the best is an ankle boot, lacing from low on the foot, up the front. The sole should be rather thin than thick, or it raises the foot too far from the ice. The upper leather—or cloth if preferred—should be stiff and well-fitted, so as to be capable of being firmly laced, that it may give full support to the ankle, where, in skating, all the strain rests.

There is still a desideratum in skate fastenings. Some mode is wanted that will be alike simple and secure, quickly put on, and more universal in its application than any I have named. The deficiency in all the new plans is, that their use is nearly limited to one particular pair of boots. You

cannot borrow your friend's skates on an emergency, nor lend your own. Nevertheless, I would not sacrifice security of fastening to any other consideration ; and the general application is of less consequence, as every one who is particular about his skating, will set apart a pair of boots for the purpose.

In conclusion, I need hardly suggest, that to keep the irons highly polished, and the straps and buckles clean and in good order, is not too trivial to be worth a little attention.

CHAPTER IV.

INSTRUCTIONS IN SKATING.

Forward Striking; Serpentine; Shinty; Backward Motion;
Treading the Circle; Spread Eagle; Fencing Position.

WE will now suppose the aspirant fairly equipped, his skates firmly fixed, and himself placed—by the aid, perhaps, of some friendly hand, on the ice—on his feet, and left to his own resources.

FORWARD STRIKING OR RUNNING •

Is the first movement to be learned. I will first describe what it is, and then the steps towards attaining it.

In executing it, the skater keeps his toes turned out just so far that his feet line at right angles to each other. Each foot is lifted alternately and set down, slightly on the inside edge, when it immediately slides forward, additional impetus being communicated by the other foot, which, from its position at right angles, can push against the ice without sliding.

The first step has enabled him to progress, say on the right foot, for a yard or two ; he then sets down the left forward, while the right has taken its position at right angles to give the impetus. This movement, repeated on each foot alternately, enables the skater to attain great velocity.

We have supposed the beginner on the ice, and prepared to tumble through his first lesson. Let him, as gently as ever he pleases, attempt to walk or progress forwards. The toes should be turned outwards, and the ancles kept stiff. Even if he can, he need not lift his feet very high, and he must not try to push them out in the meantime, for he will probably find that the mere setting down will give him more impetus than he is well prepared for.

The great error beginners make is, forgetting to keep the ancle stiff ; the object of doing so is, that the whole length of the iron may be lifted from the ice simultaneously, and in setting down, the whole edge reach the ice at once. If he bends the ancle and rises on the toe as in walking, the result will probably be a fall. It will assist a learner's progress a good deal, to practice walking on dry ground, or in a room, with skates on ; it will teach him to keep his ancles stiff, the necessity for which I have so much dwelt on.

A jolly good tumble now and then, may be considered an inevitable necessity, and the learner must be prepared to bear it with what philosophy he may; nevertheless, it is desirable to have it as gentle as possible, and for this purpose the body should be inclined well forwards, and the arms left free. Eschew a stick; it is no assistance, but rather the reverse, and it impedes improvement.

I have heard of some faint-hearted beginners adopting a certain article of female attire (modified to the circumstances of the case), to mitigate concussions. But if they would always incline forwards, their falls would usually follow the same direction, and they would not feel the necessity for such an expedient.

What with bruises and tired ankles, possibly a little ridicule at his many falls, or an occasional practical joke from some more expert companion, the first day or two goes off rather unpleasantly; but that the exultation at gaining a new power more than counterbalances all misfortunes, is best proved by the fact, that no one is deterred by them, at least, I never heard of any; on the contrary, the moment the day's miseries are over, they leave behind them an increased appetite for more, and this appetite continues to grow with the learner's progress.

In a very few days, the learner, if he has carefully attended to the above directions, will find himself able to move about with a little more security, and he will be striking out a little. In doing so, let him be particularly careful to use both feet equally, and not acquire the bad habit of doing everything with the right foot, to the neglect of the left. Continued practice will soon make him perfect in forward striking, and bring him on step by step, not merely to freedom and grace in his movements, but to the attainment of those more difficult evolutions which we will afterwards describe.

THE SERPENTINE. FORWARDS WITHOUT STRIKING.

The feet, instead of at right angles, are placed parallel. Without lifting either, turn both at once in the same direction, say to the right, swinging the body with them. Then both to the left, with a swing to that side, and so on. The skater progresses in a wavy line, apparently without effort, and the velocity acquired is considerable.

The easiest way to learn is, after taking a few strokes forward to gain force, bring the feet together, and while going along in that way, attempt to make the line wavy by swinging the body, and

turning the feet first to the right, and then to the left; aiding the motion, by pushing against the ice with the left when going to the right, and *vice-versa*. The knees must be kept slightly bent. At first it is difficult to keep up the speed you commence with, but after a little practice the impetus can not only be kept up, but originated, without requiring any striking for the commencement.

This movement is not perhaps elegant, but it is a great relaxation from the fatigue of striking, without much diminution of speed. Moreover, if you come to a weak bit of ice, it is much the safest way of crossing it, as the motion is more gentle, and the weight divided equally between the two feet.

SHINTY. *Anglice*, HOCKEY.

Although this variation in skating is considered altogether "*infra dig*" by our most accomplished performers, and is entirely ignored by the Glasgow Skating Club, (and very properly so where the space is somewhat limited, as it is rather annoying to be knocked off one's equilibrium in the middle of some difficult figure, or finely balanced poise, and dashed to the ice by the stampedo rush of a party of frantic players), yet I cannot forbear from a few words in its favour.

Where there is room, I consider following the shinty ball on skates an exhilarating and invigorating pastime ; and, what is still more to the purpose, I know no other sort of practice that will give a learner so much confidence and security on his skates.

Of course he must be able to run about pretty freely before he can attempt shinty, but when he can, the keen spirit of the game, urging him after the ball, with rapid runs, sudden stops, and quick turns, quite heedless of falls and impediments, will give him a control over his skates that twice as much less exciting practice would not. Sharp heeled skates are a great advantage in this sort of skating.

BACKWARD MOTION.

The common backward motion on both feet is exactly the same as the "Serpentine," except being backwards instead of forwards. When trying it, lie well forward,—turn the right toe inward, and push yourself back from that foot, then turn the left one inward, pushing from it, and so on alternately.

Great speed can be acquired, but there is nothing either useful or graceful in this movement, beyond lessening the awkwardness of feeling your-

self moving backwards, and it may thus a little facilitate some of the more difficult evolutions; though, further than the freedom and confidence which *varied* practice gives, neither this nor the "Serpentine" are necessary steps towards figure skating.

TREADING THE CIRCLE.

This is a backward movement in a circle, with both feet employed. Astonishing velocity may be acquired by a little practice.

Set the feet straight forward, the one behind the other; that is, the toe of the one to the heel of the other. Lean well forward, and slightly lift one foot, setting it down again in its place, then lift the other also slightly, and set it down in its place;—repeat this slight motion alternately, never changing the relative position of the feet. You will very soon find that this lifting and setting down, slight as it seems, is enough to propel you backwards, circling to whichever side you lean. The bearing should be most on the front foot, which should rest on the outside edge, the other being inside. When the circle is small and slow, the lifting of the feet should be imperceptible; but to increase the size, and attain speed, it must be more marked.

THE SPREAD EAGLE.

I describe this figure without recommending it. It is ungraceful in the extreme, and leads to nothing else. It is executed by placing the feet in the dancing master's "first position," heel to heel, in as near a straight line as possible, but about a foot apart, the knees being bent. The impetus having first been obtained by a few forward strokes, the feet are brought quickly into the position; when the natural consequence is a circle sideways, made on the inside edge, and larger or smaller according as the feet are more or less in line, and the body more or less upright.

If the feet can be turned still more, so that the toes are behind the heels,—the knees still bent, but the body very upright or inclining backwards, the circle becomes one on the outside edge, which has an extraordinary appearance from its extreme difficulty; but not, even then, does it approach elegance.

THE FENCING POSITION.

This is one of Captain Jones' figures, and though only a modification of the last mentioned, is in every way superior to it. The feet are in the same position, but you rest most on the one in front; instead of going on either edge of the iron, you

must keep on the flat, so that you move in a perfectly straight line, without curving either way, and in this lies the difficulty. The attitude, from which the name is taken, is thus described :—

“The right arm (when going to the right) must
“be held out nearly in a line with the shoulder,
“and the eyes fixed on the fingers of that hand.
“The body must be held as upright as possible,
“the breast held out, and the head back ; all these
“positions must be well observed, otherwise it will
“be impossible to move in a right line, or to keep
“your balance.”

I give the reader the illustration of this position.

Another variation of the “Spread Eagle” is given by Captain Jones. It is to combine the inside circle and the outside, by executing, in the position of the spread eagle, a curve on each edge alternately, which must be extremely difficult.

CHAPTER V.

FIGURE SKATING.

Inside Edge Forward; Outside Edge Forward; Rolling;
Travelling; Crossing; Figure 8; Spiral Line; Sea Serpent.

I NOW come to those figures which require such proficiency on the part of the skater, as will enable him to dwell for some space on one foot.

As already stated, the bottom of the iron is about a quarter of an inch broad, but in skating, this is only in a few rare positions perfectly flat on the ice; it is the sharp edge of the bottom that the skater uses—sometimes the one edge, sometimes the other. The one is called the inside, the other the outside; and the evolutions which are designated “Inside” or “Outside,” refer to which edge of the iron is used in executing them.

The turns on the inside edge are comparatively easy, because the skater requires to lean very little off the centre of gravity, and it is towards that

side where he has the other foot ready to support him in case of need.

Those on the outside edge are, on the other hand, very difficult to attain, because the learner must lean very considerably off the centre of gravity before he properly reaches the outside edge; and he leans to that side where he is deprived of the aid of the other foot. It would be quite impossible to stand in this position, but he can circle or curve, because the centrifugal force keeps him from falling.

INSIDE EDGE FORWARD.

When the young skater can run freely, and feels himself pretty well at home on his skates, he will naturally dwell longer on each stroke than at first; and as, in describing "Forward Striking," I mentioned that it is done on the inside edge, and as the iron always circles towards the side on which it rests, it follows, that dwelling on the stroke gives the arc of an inside circle, which a little longer dwelling on that foot would complete.

This is very easily learned, but, unfortunately, when learned, it is worth nothing; and I mention it, only because it comes naturally to the beginner; and he is apt to think he is doing a very fine thing when he can go on one foot in any way; whereas,

I think he should rather avoid practising the inside edge forwards, as it is never used by good skaters, and, I fear, rather impedes the acquirement of the outside edge. Backwards, it is a different thing, but of that anon.

OUTSIDE FORWARDS.

This is unquestionably the most graceful and elegant performance on skates, and no one can have any pretensions to be considered a moderately good skater, who is deficient in it.

All the most difficult figures are variations of the outside roll ; and it is therefore of the utmost importance to the learner's subsequent proficiency, to be well grounded in it.

There is, I fully believe, only one way of learning it well, and if the learner is uninstructed in that, he may labour for years, and, after all, not acquire the correct balance.

Let the skater, by means of common skating, attempt to move round in a circle ; at first it may be of any size he pleases, and gradually reduced as he improves, till he gets to eight or ten feet diameter, which is the best size for practising. He is not to strike out—and the moment he feels himself doing so, he had better stop and begin again ; the mere lifting and setting down of the

feet gives sufficient impetus. He lifts one foot, crosses it slowly in front of the other, and sets it down, then the other in front of that, and so on alternately; always dwelling as long as he can on whichever foot is nearest the inside of the circle, because that foot is working on the outside edge of the skate—and as briefly as possible on the other, which works on the inside edge. The foot that is behind, must be kept behind till it is to be set down, then brought forward, and the instant it is in front, down with it; it must not be carried in the air in front for an instant.

When tired skating with the right foot to the inside of the circle, go off in the other direction, that is, making a circle with the left foot to the inside of it, when you will dwell most on the left,—and be particular to give both ways equal practice.

When first the learner tries skating round in a circle, he will find it rather difficult, but in an hour or two he will get round with comparative ease; and after a few days at this, varied, of course, with other practice, he will be surprised at his own progress; he will find himself able to dwell for a few yards on the outside edge, with the raised foot behind him—perhaps nearly to complete the circle.

There is no other mode of learning that will

give equal confidence in leaning over to the outside, or enable the learner to acquire the correct balance, and yet keep the raised foot well back; And even after the skater can complete the circle on the outside edge with tolerable ease, he will find benefit from occasionally reverting to this practice; particularly at the beginning of a season, when he may feel a little insecure.

ROLLING.

This is the first mode of turning to account the last lesson. It consists of an outside semicircle on each foot alternately; and has been termed Rolling, on account of the marked inclination of the body, first to one side, then to the other, as the skater circles to the right or to the left. To the mere spectator, it appears more wonderful than anything else, as the body is manifestly in a position which it would appear impossible to maintain for a moment without falling.

It is maintained, as I have already mentioned, by centrifugal force; and the inclination can therefore be much increased by increased speed: exactly as Franconi's horses walk round the circus upright—canter at a slight inclination inwards—but when put to the gallop, lie over in a position in which they could not stand for an instant.

Except in executing any of the figures, it is not necessary to complete the circle in Rolling. The skater changes the foot when he has a mind ; nevertheless, I would recommend the learner not to attempt to alternate the feet, until he can do a complete circle on either separately. If he begins trying to alternate as soon as he can go a yard or two on the outside edge, he will inevitably check his acquirement of the proper inclination.

When he has attained the single circle on either foot properly, changing from one to the other at pleasure is easily acquired. To make the change, he must bring forward the raised foot, and set it down in front on the outside edge, at the same time changing the inclination of the body to that side. In making this change, the foot that has just finished its curve comes over momentarily on to the inside edge, from which he takes the impetus for his new circle. As in common "Forward Striking," at the moment of making each stroke, the feet are at right angles to each other.

The raised foot must not be brought forward till it has to be set down ; for nothing is more awkward and ungainly looking, than to see a skater rolling with the raised foot, perhaps, up high in front of him, or sticking up stiffly to one side, like a pump handle. But, as doing so acts as a coun-

terbalance to the lean over, it is easier than the right way, and the learner is very apt to fall into a bad habit, which a careful beginning would avoid.

Captain Jones' plan of teaching is rather different from what I have described, and I shall therefore extract it for the reader's consideration. He says :

“To preserve the balance on the outside edge, is so difficult to be acquired, that I have known many to spend three or four winters in learning it. To prevent such disappointment, I will lay down one general rule, which I have never known to fail, even with those who at first seem the most awkward.

“Suppose a stroke to be made on the left foot, it must be put down on the flat, with the knee bent, the head inclined to the left, the right arm held out, nearly upon a line with the shoulder, and the left arm held close to the side ; then, with the right foot, impel yourself to the left, by often pressing the inside edge of the skait on the ice ; the left foot is not to be taken off. By this method, you will make a sweep, which you must endeavour to increase, by inclining the body to the left, and bearing on the outside edge of the skait, and by gradually increasing your inclina-

“ation, and turning the head more and more to the left shoulder, you will form a spiral line. This method must be reversed for the right foot; and if practised for two or three days, the outside edge may be acquired.”

The reader will observe this is exactly the mode of propulsion adopted by little boys whose slender resources have not attained the possession of a second skate. I do not believe that those who learn skating in that way, have any particular facility for the outside edge, and I confidently assert, that if the young skater tries the Captain's lesson, he will fail, or learn very slowly; for, depend upon it, nothing but going round in a circle will teach him to lean over, for nothing else will give the centrifugal force which alone enables it to be done. The Captain was evidently not aware of this, for he devotes a very pedantic chapter to the enquiry, why it is possible to maintain the body in a falling position, “which must appear to those who neither consider nor understand the reason, as it were somewhat amazing; but if mechanically considered, it may be easily conceived with this allowance, that nature here, as well as on many occasions, acts in a manner that cannot be entirely reduced to mechanical principles.”

"This allowance" is certainly a very neat way of jumping the difficulty, and flooring "those who neither consider nor understand." It is a fair specimen of military logic in the dark ages. He then goes into an elaborate argument, to prove that a wooden representative of humanity could not possibly maintain an inclination so far off the centre of gravity, and concludes: "I can assign no other reason for his being capable of supporting himself in such an attitude, than the wonderful construction and manner of acting of the muscles."

For learning Rolling, the next authority, likewise a military one, Captain Clias, says:

"Much assistance may be derived from placing a bag of lead shot in the pocket next to the foot employed, which will produce an artificial poise of the body, which afterwards will become natural by practice."

With all deference, I should fancy that, if an artificial counterpoise is to be used, the hand farthest from the foot employed, would be the best place for giving it power. But I beg the learner to use nothing of the sort.

The Reader will, I hope, excuse my dwelling so long upon "Rolling," for the reason that it may well be considered the key to everything else; and

I wish to give him all the information in my power.

I have still one important point to discuss, namely, the attitude. I recommend a quiet one, without exaggeration or attempt at display. My taste may no doubt be called in question, but somehow, I don't half admire Mr. Augustus Fitznoodle, the handsome young gentleman who rolls very finely indeed, with his foot well behind him, (a yard or two at least,) the arm on the same side following suit, the other one high in air in front, personifying, to our dull imaginations, a demigod on the wing for Heaven. But as we have no record of the gods skating, though they did many less innocent things, (and even supposing, for the sake of his aftertype, that Apollo did wear an imperial,) I would advise my friend Augustus to descend from his etherials, and adopt an attitude more in keeping with his character and occupation.

But in avoiding Scylla, Ulysses managed to steer clear of Charybdis also ; so in avoiding Augustus, it is not absolutely necessary that you adopt the extreme of carelessness or awkwardness. "Est quiddam inter Tanain discordem," &c., &c. For instance, how much we all admire the exceeding perseverance and unbounded enthusiasm displayed

by our friend, Mr. Samuel Cairliss, an enthusiasm that can shine through six days of the week, and not flag much on the seventh either, if there is ice; and we would no doubt equally admire the results, if he did not study to prove that grace and elegance are trifles beneath his notice. He could surely do otherwise if he would, but, in scorning Augustus' magnet of attraction, extreme elegance, he constitutes himself the negative pole.

The skate circles beautifully, but the knee above it is awkwardly bent, while the leg in the air is held as if playing football, and just about to make a tremendous kick. The head is obscured somewhere among the shoulders,—the eyes are watching the progress of the feet,—and as for the arms, they assume the most awkward positions attainable on the spur of the moment.

"In medio tutissimus ibis," there is a medium; and here, reader, on this piece of beautiful smooth ice, near the side, by the hedgerow, you will see it. Those white carved figure 8s, and snowy circles, where the balls lie, are the "*vestigia magistri*;" and Lord F, the indubitable "*genius loci*," is there, and the Medico, and Mr. Rodon,* the three veritable Graces, elaborating and illustrating

* *Ῥόδον Χαρίττας συγχροῦναι.*—*Anacreon.*

the real poetry of motion ;—true elegance, not the Brummagem sort, sported by Augustus. Look now at the attitudes in these circles, all are alike, though with their own individuality.

The right foot firm on the ice,—the knee straight,—the right shoulder slightly forward,—the head erect,—and the eye looking before them ; the right arm bent, and half raised, but never higher than the shoulder,—the left arm hanging easily by the side,—the left knee bent, and turned well outward,—the toe pointing to the ice, just a few inches above and behind the other heel.

So much at least for my opinion ; but that the reader may have a little more choice, I will tell him what other writers say on the subject of attitude.

Captain Jones, for “Travelling” on the outside edge, recommends “the hands in the side pockets as most easy.” One would almost suppose he had Glasgow in view when he wrote that, as the inhabitants of the western metropolis are proverbially supposed to make use of these receptacles as substitutes for gloves ; probably from their fondness for fingering the plethora of coin understood to repose there. “Travelling,” I may mention, is just “Rolling” in a milder form ; instead of circling, the curve is reduced to something not far off a straight line, but still on the outside edge.

Skating, as in the Olden Time.



Rolling.

This is the movements used in northern countries, for going journeys ; reducing the curve of course saves distance and time.

For "Genteel Rolling," he says : " Let the arms be easily crossed over the breast ; some chuse to let them hang down at their sides, and others put them behind their backs, both these methods are straining, and not graceful." I give the reader the benefit of an illustration of Captain Jones' attitude, on which the only changes I recommend, are, to straighten the leg on the ice, (which only in starting should be slightly bent,) to lower the raised one a good deal, and to unlock the arms. We have got to consider the crossed arms so exclusively an attribute of Widdicombe's Napoleon, that, in these modern times, it would appear affected, and more "straining" than either of the attitudes condemned as being so.

Captain Clias says : " On the commencement of the outside stroke, the knee of the employed limb should be a little bended, and gradually brought to a rectilinear position when the stroke is completed. On taking the stroke, the body ought to be thrown forward easily, the unemployed limb kept in a direct line with the body, and the face and eyes looking directly forward ; the unemployed foot ought to be stretched to-

“wards the ice, with the toes in a direct line with
“the leg. While making the curve, the body
“must be gradually and imperceptibly raised, and
“the unemployed limb brought in the same man-
“ner forward; so that, at finishing the curve, the
“body will bend a small degree backward, and
“the unemployed foot will be about two inches
“before the other, ready to embrace the ice, and
“form a correspondent curve.

“The muscular movement of the whole body
“must correspond with the movement of the skate,
“and should be regulated so as to be almost im-
“perceptible. Particular attention should be paid
“in carrying round the head and eyes with a re-
“gular and imperceptible motion; for nothing so
“much diminishes the grace and elegance of skat-
“ing, as sudden jerks and exertions too frequently
“used by the generality of skaters.”

The above is all excellent,—the only alterations I would suggest are, to straighten the employed leg as soon as you can,—to keep the unemployed one less stiff, by bending the knee and turning it outwards—and to delay bringing the foot forward till ready to change.

For the arms, the same authority says, “there
“is no mode of disposing of them more gracefully
“in skating outside, than folding the hands into
“each other, or *using a muff*.”

If our modern Bloomers take to skating, for which, indeed, the costume is admirably adapted, that last suggestion should not be lost sight of; though, I dare say, even they will find it more useful, in learning, to take their friend Augustus' arm, and limit themselves for a time to that mode of "using a muff."

The attitude for "Rolling," may be considered, a sort of general one, as, with very slight variations, it is correct for all the figures on one foot.

There is another mode of "Rolling," which is more difficult than elegant, but as some may like anything for variety, I will briefly describe it. When the curve is completed, and the raised foot coming forward for the new stroke, instead of setting it down with the heel towards the inside of the foot on the ice, and at right angles with it, sweep the raised foot round completely across the other, and set it down outside of it, and nearly parallel. The impetus is all got in the setting down of the foot, not by pushing off from the other, as in common Rolling, and hence the difficulty.

FIGURE 8.

This is "Rolling" so as quite to complete the circle with each foot alternately; the starting point

is the centre of the 8, and finishing one circle brings you back to that point to start for the second circle. This is a most beautiful figure, and excellent practice; to make it available for skating in concert, you must learn to execute the pair of circles, repeating them always in the same tracks. Throw your glove on the ice, or make some mark for your starting point, at which your circles must also finish. You must also learn to make the circles large or small at pleasure, and to control your movement, so as to keep time with your partners.

THE SPIRAL LINE.

Take as many forward strokes as will bring you to your top speed, then start on one foot for a large outside circle, but instead of completing it at the starting point, reduce the circle as you proceed, continuing as long as the impetus lasts, which may easily be for three or four complete turns, the circles becoming gradually smaller.

The attitude for this is the same as for Rolling, but, as the balance is more difficult, the unemployed limb must be a little more raised, and the arms a little more extended, taking care, however, to avoid exaggeration.

THE SEA SERPENT.

This is rather a whimsical movement, and, I dare say, will not prove a favourite with my readers; but as its difficulty may prove an attraction, I put it in their option.

With three or four forward strokes to gain power, start on one foot outside, and after making a semicircle, change the skate to the inside edge, at the same moment bringing forward the raised leg in front, and sweeping it back again without setting down; when you have done a semicircle on the inside, change back to the outside, giving the same sweep of the leg, and so on alternately. You can, in this way, progress without ever putting the raised foot on the ice; at first, you will only be able to continue while the first impetus lasts, but by practice you will increase your number of curves, till you can dispense with the preliminary striking altogether, and make the movement self-sustaining. The change from one edge to the other, and the impetus, must be derived from the sweep of the raised leg, and a corresponding swing of the body, not from any twisting of the ankle. The semicircles should be as full and equal as possible.

This figure, under a different name, was a favourite in the last century, but now it is rarely practised.

CHAPTER VI.

BACKWARD AND MIXED FIGURES.

Inside Edge Backwards; Outside Edge Backwards; Flying Mercury; Straight Line; Cork Leg; Figure 3; Reverse Figure 3; Shamrock; 4 Figure; Double 3; Double 3 Reverse; Satellite; Salutation; Conclusion.

THE Figures of which this chapter treats, may be considered the highest attainments in skating, notwithstanding that some of them may come more naturally to the young skater than one or two of those that have been described earlier.

INSIDE BACKWARDS

Is never used except as part of another figure; it will be best learned in acquiring Figure 3.

OUTSIDE BACKWARDS.

Having, in a previous chapter, been instructed in going backwards on both feet, you will have observed that, in doing it, one foot rests on the

inside edge and the other on the outside, that on the inside being the one from which you derive the impetus. Take a few strokes backwards to gain force, and you will be able, by leaning to one side or the other, to describe a backward circle on both feet. Rest as much as possible on the foot nearest the inside of the circle, which works on the outside edge of the iron, trying to lift the other altogether, and which, with a little practice, you will soon find yourself able to do.

When you can complete the circle either way, you must learn to alternate. The common and easiest mode of doing so is, as soon as you push back, lift the foot you do it with, rising on to the other with a straight knee; when you wish to change, set down the raised foot, and take the stroke from the other, lifting it as soon as you have done so. The objection to this mode of doing it is, that while you are taking each stroke, both feet are on the ice together for a time, which entirely destroys the effect, and makes the movement appear laboured and awkward, whereas, when done in the correct way, it is perhaps the most beautiful that can be accomplished.

The mode I allude to, when well performed, is as follows :

The skater, when one circle is complete, and he

wishes to change, sets the raised foot, with the toe turned well out, down on the ice, crossed in behind the other, and rises upon it without stroke of any kind; the front foot is raised and carried slowly backwards with a sweep, so as to get behind in time for setting down, crossed as before; then the other is lifted also with a slow sweep round, to be set down behind in its turn. While sweeping the raised foot round, the head follows the movement, that is, looking over the left shoulder while circling on the right foot, and *vice versa*. Turning the head not only assists the curve, but enables you to see where you are going, and thus avoid collisions, which might otherwise be very frequent with backward skating. The beauty of this figure depends on its total absence of effort, the impetus being got merely by the setting down of the feet, and the correct balance of the body.

The way to learn it is, to try to walk backwards, as slowly as ever you like, setting down each foot alternately, crossed in behind the other, with the toe much turned out, and the skate always on the outside edge. You need not attempt any circle at first, or to dwell on either foot, but when one is set down, raise the other, and at once put it down behind. You will very soon

Skating, as in the Olden Time.



acquire confidence in changing the feet, and you can then try to dwell a little on each, and so gradually work on to the full circle. This beautiful movement is not so difficult to learn as it looks, but whatever trouble it costs him, the skater will not regret it.

FLYING MERCURY.

This is a very large backward circle on the outside edge, and it has received its name from the attitude, which, as the reader will see in the illustration, is a very striking one—much more so than there is any occasion for. I consider this the same figure as the “Spiral,” only backwards instead of forwards. Indeed, formerly, when backward movements were not practised, the name was applied to the large forward circle.

The figure is performed by taking a few forward strokes with great force, wheeling suddenly round on to the outside edge, and endeavouring to describe as large a circle backwards as you can. The difficulty is to get round so quickly as not to lose force, and then to attain the balance, which, from the size of the circle, is a very delicate one. To make the wheel requires great confidence, and that is only got by practice.

There are several modes of getting round on to

the outside. One way is to use figure 3, which will be found described a little farther on. As soon as the second half of that figure commences; that is, just as you are getting on to the inside backwards, set pown the other foot on the outside edge, and rise upon it. It is still simpler to do it by the reverse figure 3, as you get at once on to the outside edge; or it may be done thus, and, I think, with more force than by either of the other modes:—After a few strokes forward at full speed, bring the feet together, rise on both toes, and spring round (to either side), at the same time rising on one foot and catching the balance. In whichever of these you employ, the motion must be quicker than its description, or, I fear, you will lose too much force.

While you are learning so difficult a balance, you are at liberty to use your arms and unemployed leg to the fullest, spreading them as you please, to get the balance, but when the figure is acquired, the attitude had better be restrained to that of the “Spiral.”

THE STRAIGHT LINE

Is very similar to the last figure, but you have to catch the balance without leaning on to either edge of the skate, keeping on the flat of the iron, and this carries you back in a straight line. As the

skate takes no hold of the ice, this balance is extremely difficult to acquire.

The inside edge is also sometimes used, but it is neither difficult nor graceful, and had better be avoided.

THE CORK LEG.

This, like the "Sea Serpent," is a figure in which, by alternate outside and inside curves, you progress on one foot without ever setting down the other; but the motion is differently executed, and it is done backwards.

The body is inclined slightly forwards, and the impetus is derived by twisting the ankle so as to throw the skate on to the inside and outside edge alternately, describing very small curves on each. The raised foot is held motionless behind the other, and takes so little part in the figure that it might be dispensed with altogether,—whence the name.

FIGURE 3.

This is described by means of an outside roll forwards for half a circle, then changing to inside backwards on the same foot, without bringing down the other in any way.

The change is effected mainly by a swing of the body,—which, if the ankle is kept stiff, will of

itself change the edge of the skate to the inside; the learner must therefore pay more regard to the balance of the body, than to the feet. In learning, he will feel constrained to make the first turn of the figure a very small one, but as he improves, he must endeavour to extend it to the full semi-circle.

When he can do it on each foot separately, he must learn to do it alternately; after completing the figure on one foot, going freely off on to the other, and so travelling about the pond where he pleases, as he does in Rolling. After that, he must learn to control his movement so that he can make the figure finish exactly in the spot where it commenced, as that is necessary for combined figure skating, though the **3** somewhat loses its form by the change. To practise for this, he must follow the same directions as given for figure **8**. The **3** was introduced in the last century as the "heart-shaped figure," and was then thought so difficult as to be quite the acme of skating accomplishment.

FIGURE **3** REVERSE.

This is not so often practised as the former, but it should be acquired, as it assists other figures. It commences with inside forwards for half a circle or rather less, when the body is quickly turned, so

as to complete the figure with outside backwards on the same foot, and without setting down the other.

THE SHAMROCK.

This figure is so named on account of its consisting of three circles, each about two thirds completed. After a very full figure **3**, on completing the inside backward circle, change the edge of the skate again to the outside, and finish the figure with a circle of outside backwards—thus executing three different motions on the one foot, without setting down the other. The last change is effected by quickly throwing the body backwards, and it is easiest done when the middle circle has been a very complete one. It is a difficult and beautiful figure.

THE Q FIGURE.

Start with a curve on the outside forwards, then change the edge to inside forwards, and finish with a circle outside backwards, all on the one foot, without setting down the other. It is just the "Reverse Figure **3**," with an outside curve put before it; but, simple as that addition appears, the learner will find it adds more than he may perhaps expect to the difficulty.

It is well worth learning, being a very neat figure when well executed.

DOUBLE 3.

After completing a figure 3, repeat it on the same foot without setting down the other; this requires you to change from inside backwards at once to outside forwards, and it is very difficult. The skater who is sufficiently advanced to attempt it, requires no directions. It is not enough, however, that he succeeds in making all the changes, and gets through the figure anyhow, probably dwelling only for an instant on the first turn of the second 3; each semicircle must be full, or the beauty of the figure is lost, and it becomes a mere spin.

When the skater once attains the double 3, he can triple it, or even more.

DOUBLE 3 REVERSE.

This can also be done, and, when once attained, can be continued almost *ad libitum*; but the turn from outside backward to inside forward is rather too much of a jerk to be very pretty, and therefore this figure is quite inferior to the preceding.

FIGURE SKATING IN CONCERT.

Any one who has mastered the detached figures, can very soon, by a little special practice with companions, acquire this. The object is to combine various movements in any arrangement agreed on, so timed that all the skaters, working from one common centre, interweave the figures and circles without collision, and when this is skillfully done the effect is beautiful.

The figures most used, are figure 3s, and back and forward outside circles. They require to be executed with great precision, and the skater must have such perfect control of his movements, as to be able to make any change at any instant, or on any spot required. Balls are usually placed on the ice for guides.

I will describe two of the most simple combinations, after learning which my readers will be well able to arrange for themselves.

THE SATELLITE.

Any convenient number may join in this. Suppose a circle on the ice of about nine feet diameter—the skaters take their places round the outside of this circle at equal distances from each other; a ball or some other mark must be placed at each position. The skaters all start at once, describing

the centre circle on the outside edge, and in the same direction. On completing the circle to within one ball of his starting point, each skater goes off on the other foot, also on the outside, thus making a diverging circle round the ball he stopped at. All complete these satellite circles at the same instant, and start again as before round the centre one, each stopping one ball short of his last, and making a second satellite. The figure is complete when each skater has gone round every ball in its turn, but it may be continued *ad libitum*.

This figure may be varied by executing figure 3s for the diverging or satellite circles.

THE SALUTATION.

This is the figure 8 in concert, and requires two or four. Two stand face to face, about two feet apart—both start at once, say on the right foot, for an outside circle. In starting, they pass each other on the right side, going opposite ways. On their respective circles being complete, they are again face to face, but in changed positions; and start on the left foot, passing each other on the left side, so that each skater describes his companion's circle the reverse way.

When four do it, the second pair describe their figure 8 at right angles across the other, starting

at the moment when the first pair are hardly half-way round their circle. All should commence on the same foot. In the days of minuets, this figure was performed with a great deal of pomp and gesture—with touching of hands and lifting of beavers, from which it derived its name; but all that sort of thing may now be dispensed with.

In this figure also, 3s may be substituted for circles; and most of the complex figures (or quadrilles, as they are somewhat foppishly called) are variations on this.

I now find that my pleasant and self-imposed task has reached its conclusion. Deficient, no doubt, in some respects, and imperfect in others, I may have omitted many figures,—from ignorance—or from intention; but I can safely say that the skater who masters all that I have described, if he unites, as he can hardly fail to do, a certain degree of freedom and grace in his carriage, may well esteem himself an adept. There is nothing on skates that he may not freely attempt afterwards; and he may employ his inventive faculties in working out new evolutions and combinations for himself.

An advantage possessed by this pastime over most others, I did not formerly advert to; yet it

is no small matter to those whose scholastic or business pursuits fully occupy the brief daylight of a winter's day, that skating requires no such accurate vision as to prevent its being enjoyed at night, unless, indeed, the night is very dark. Nay, I am not prepared to say that it does not acquire higher zest, and is not followed with keener relish, when it comes as the relaxation after the day's toil. In the clear and bracing atmosphere of a frosty night, when

“ ——The floor of heaven

“Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold,”

such pastime will bring both health and pleasure to the thought-worn and the weary.

Moreover, we have the chances of the moonlight.

“ —— Fair Cynthia, she who never sleeps,

“But walks about high heaven all the night,”

seems particularly partial to doing so when our frosts are keenest ; and never does the “smile of the moon” give us more “tender greeting” than when her full round orb rises over the trees that fringe the banks of some pleasant sheet of frozen water.

My days of enthusiasm are perhaps a little on the wane,—more's the pity ; but in my “calida juvenia,” many a time and oft have I spent long and pleasant hours of merry moonlight on the ice-

bound waters, with no company save my own thoughts.

In such solitude, what feelings and emotions stir the heart exhilarated by this glorious exercise, I will not attempt to tell, seeing that the "great master" has done so before me, and how better can I conclude, than by giving them to the reader in their true and fitting utterance; and then I may say, though not in the implied, at least in the literal sense—"Finis coronat opus."

* * * * *

"In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
 "Twas mine among the fields both day, and night,
 "And by the waters, all the summer long.
 "And in the frosty season, when the sun
 "Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
 "The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
 "I heeded not the summons: happy time
 "It was indeed for all of us; for me
 "It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
 "The village clock tolled six.—I wheeled about,
 "Proud and exulting like an untired horse
 "That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel,
 "We hissed along the polished ice, in games
 "Confederate, imitative of the chase
 "And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
 "The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare,
 "So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 "And not a voice was idle: with the din
 "Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;

" The leafless trees and every icy crag
" Tinkled like iron ; while the distant hills
" Into the tumult sent an alien sound
" Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars
" Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
" The orange sky of evening died away.

" Not seldom from the uproar I retired
" Into a silent bay, or sportively
" Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
" *To cut across the reflex of a star ;*
" Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
" Upon the glassy plain : and often times,
" When we had given our bodies to the wind,
" And all the shadowy banks on either side
" Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
" The rapid line of motion, then at once
" Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
" Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
" Wheeled by me—even as if the Earth had rolled
" With visible motion her diurnal round !
" Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
" Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
" Till all was tranquil as a summer sea."



